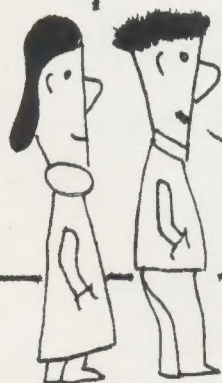


The Lyre



Do Not
Touch

Wow! What kind of
Art is THAT!



Well, It's that
New type of poetry
without words

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Trophy Picture by Peter Kang winner of Underclassmen Art Award

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Cover Art by Peter Cumpstone - *Winner of Upperclassmen Art Award*

Note From The Editor

The *Lyre* this year unveils a unique new format. The introduction of new genres, such as essays and interviews, will inevitably lead some to question what the *Lyre* is all about. Narrow perceptions of literature are partly to blame, but the dilemma of purpose remains. The *Lyre*, I contend, is a gallery of Art.

What is art? To me, art is the revelation of truth. Inspired works that show us something new about our world, our society, or ourselves - these are Art. Thus, no true definitive barrier can be made between fiction and nonfiction in the artistic sphere. In this sense artists range from Euclid, Michaelangelo, and Mary Shelly to Jackson Pollard, Timothy Leary, and Jello Biafra. Though few achieve the lofty goal of Understanding - not all of us are K'ung Fu Tzes or Salvador Dalis - many betray flashes of inspiration and help us seek Truth. The *Lyre* is dedicated to this tiny core of creativity in Jesuit and the world.

I am no artist. I truly wish I were. The pages of the *Lyre*, however, are populated primarily with just this - rudimentary attempts at true Art. Yet, I sincerely hope that this publication will serve its purpose, and fan the fires of inspiration among the student body.

The *Lyre* is a yearly publication of creativity from the student body of Jesuit High School. All students are encouraged to submit prose, poetry, visual art, or any other form of printable art to the *Lyre*.

We would like to thank the Dads' Club for their valuable assistance.

The *Lyre* is a member of the Florida Scholastic Press Association.



The Mirror

by Stephen Wheeler

It hung on the wall,
And many passed by,
But no one heard,
What it had to say.

The father looked in,
Overworked and tired,
A slave to his job,
And he stands . . . horrified.

The mother, in turn, took her stand,
Swearing to fulfill her wants for the day,
She did not need the love of man,
For money made her cares go away.

The son looked in the mirror,
With fire in his eyes,
He never realized how ugly it was,
To vandalize.

The daughter looked at herself,
And saw every man's treasure,
She yearns for the flesh,
She lives for the pleasure.

Every house has at least one mirror.

WHEN THE MOON SHUT

by James Lopez

Lyre upperclassman prose award winner

The door screeched slowly open as a daze of moonlight blew in through the entrance. The night was beginning to come down and the shadows were incomplete. In a distant corner, a large industrious clock with big booming numbers and a bright red second hand spoke. Tick, tock, tick, tock, keeping meter on the hearts of those seated.

But the moonlight that blasted through the door was interrupted, was broken by a human figure. Tall with broad shoulders, the head moved slowly east and west, and though it was dark and the face could not be seen clearly, his eyes shone like spotlights at night and broke the darkness with azure laser beams from cold, blue eyes. Meanwhile, the clock sung, tick, tock, tick, tock.

The body stood stoically, bathing in the moonlight for a long moment. The head continued its movement, left, right, left, right, tick, tock, tick, tock, tick, tock. The cold spotlights swept back and forth and back again surveying the tired faces, too tired to even look up. Nothing more than faces, faces, faces, and not a difference between them. And the smoke rose and the search lights became foggy until the man stood, like a lighthouse, bringing the ships home.

The swaying stopped and he walked across the room, his leather jacket fitting tightly around his slim physique and his boots resounding as they struck the uncarpeted floor. However, his boots drowned out the clock, and at that moment, when the clock stopped, every face simultaneously lifted itself to see who in their midst had the power to turn off the clock. The little eyes followed the man, the little beams, many of them, followed his figure all the way to the farthest, remotest corner of the establishment. And when he sat down, the clock went tick, tock, once again and at that moment the little searchlights turned off and the man was once again forgotten, and alone. It was as before.



L. Mann

The sun shone on my face that day so wonderfully that it made my heart leap with a pleasing nausea. I could feel the smile that leapt across my face and I was almost pleased at my helplessness to do anything about it. I combed my hair, straightened my tie for the fourth time, and got ready to walk out the door. And then the phone rang, and when I'd normally be upset I was happy, like a little boy, and so I answered the phone and she said "Hello" and I responded with a stupidly witty remark and I was pleased, with myself, with her, with my whole world. And then I hung up the phone . . . I still couldn't remove the smile from my face, but my heart was bleeding and turned my stomach red.

"One rum and coke."

The bar became darker and the many faces along with it. This bar, this American Bar, was so familiar, but the faces had changed and there was no soul in the air. The man's eyes revealed his confusion and he continued to look around, searching for a handle to pull him aboard. He could not find one.

Then, at the other end of the room, another figure began walking towards the man. His steps were soft . . . he as not noticed. He sat in the booth seat across from the man so that their faces were only about a foot apart, reached down into his pocket, lit a match and held it up to his face.

"Oh my God, Paul, it's you. I can't believe this, man. How long has it been? Man . . . I forgot how long it's been since I last saw you."

"It's been nine months, Jake."

"No way, man, you're screwing with my head."

"Wish I was but," he looked around, "I tell you, I ain't seen the old crowd since you took off, buddy. After you left, man, things just started to fall apart . . . the scene crumbled, man . . . it just crumbled."

"Shit, man, I don't recognize a face around this place. For a few moments, I thought I was in the wrong place, and if the sign out front wouldn't have said *The American Bar* I would've walked right by it." He looked around and on the verge of almost getting emotional, "Paul, man . . . what happened?"

"Well, Jake, when you left, most of the crowd got to thinking about why . . ." He couldn't go on.

"Why what?"

"Why you left. They started looking around themselves, at the leather, at the boots, the drinks, the drugs. Put it this way, man, they respected you, you were their idol. When you left, they looked inside themselves and didn't like anything they saw." He stopped for a few moments. "I joined them."

"Then why the hell are you back here, Paul?"

"Why are you, Jake?"

He stopped and thought. "I'd rather not get into it."

"Neither would I."

"Got a cigarette?"

"Sure."

The place was completely dark now except for the one candle that stayed lit by the bar. The two men sat there, the smoke billowing from their mouths and noses. Their eyes were blank. Their faces, if could be seen, reflected their loneliness. They stared at the bar and ordered more drinks.

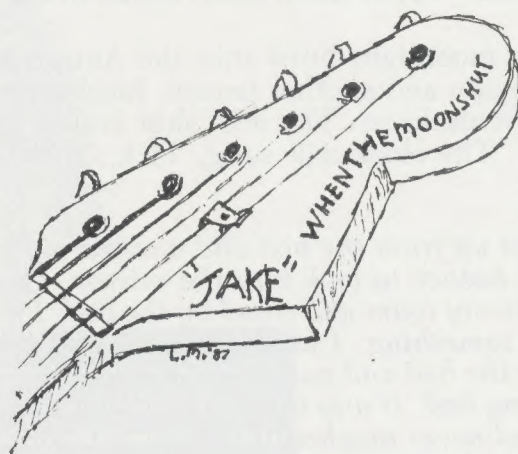
After I hung up the phone, I got undressed and laid my suit out on the bed. I was about to walk away when I looked once more. My mouth fell open, my eyes grew big, and I stared at the suit, and didn't recognize it. My chin began to twitch, I knelt down, held the suit up to my face and wet it with my tears.

"So, Jake, how's the old woman? I haven't seen Ava since the last time you left."

"She's the reason I'm here, ol' buddy."

"Are you'all still together?"

"No."



"I'm sorry, man . . . If it's any of my business, why?"

"Never mind." He looked down and then became very rigid. He shook his head, and with a renewed excitement he said, "Hey, Paul, man, let's start a new group. I can get hold of some killer equipment and I'm sure we can round up a good drummer and bassist, man. I might be able to get us a piano player. Paul, remember how much we wanted a piano player. ***, man, we could . . ."

"No, we couldn't, Jake."

"Why not?"

"Take a look around, Jake, the people, they're gone. Take a look at the stage, man, it's not even there anymore."

"We could advertise, Paul. We ain't got to play the American, man. The crowd, they'd come back to see us."

"Maybe one . . . or two."

"What the *** are you talking about? We were hot, we burned up the stage. Man, remember the chicks . . . groping, screaming. Remember, Paul, remember when that chick hit you in the face in the middle of your solo with her panties."

"Those days are dead, Jake."

"No, they're not dead . . . we could . . ."

"No, we *** couldn't, man! Those people, the scene, they're dead, man. It died. It died the moment you left. It died the moment we all looked inside of ourselves and saw that you were right. We were a bunch of losers, so we, for the most part, killed those losers inside of us."

The moonlight burst into the American Bar once again and another person, faceless, melted into the darkness. The door shut and so did the moon. The clock still sung, Tick, Tock, Tick, Tock.

I got up from the bed and washed my face. I didn't bother to look into the mirror. I walked back to my room and stood by the bed, I needed to do something. I kneeled down and reached under the bed and pulled out a white box. I laid it on my bed. It was the one and only thing that she had never touched. I started at it for almost ten minutes, paying homage to it as though it were an altar. I finally lifted the cover and looked down inside of it. The pants still shone and the leather jacket could still hold up its lapels. It felt good . . . Oh, so good.

"I feel like such a piece of ***, Paul. Here I am, your hero, dressed in the same outfit I had on nine months ago when Ava first came into the bar, thinking I could come back and recapture all those old pleasures. Me, man, I was the *** here! Man, in reality, I was the biggest loser of the whole crowd."

"That ain't true, man."

"The *** it ain't. You want to know something, Paul? I threw away my guitar and everything I owned musically. Man, I *** burned my songbook in the fireplace!"

"Why, man?"

"Ava, the *** reason why I'm back here at the American Bar, the reason why I'm in these clothes, the reason I'm all alone."

"Jake, man, you had your pick of any chick in

the scene and, not to be offensive or anything, but Ava wasn't even close to being better looking than some of those chicks you turned down."

"It wasn't her looks, Paul, it had nothing to do with her looks. She was the only woman who didn't want me to sleep with her because I was in leather pants and singing on stage. She had me thinking that she liked me for ME!" He took a sip of his drink and a deep breath. "Paul, let me tell you something: before I met Ava, for about three months, I was impotent . . . man, I couldn't even get it up with the groupies anymore. She changed that, man, but she changed me in the process."

"How do you mean?"

"I was in a three-piece suit tonight waiting to go and pick her up to see if we could get back together after we had broken up a few weeks ago. She seemed up for it. I was so happy, ecstatic, and then . . . then she called me, and like no big deal, said she had a prior engagement that she couldn't get out of." Tears began to swell in his eyes. "Man, Paul, I *** cried like a baby . . . like a *** baby!"

"And then you came here."

"I came here looking for the crowd and now they're gone. They're gone and I'm all alone. No place to look back to and no place to look forward to."

"We're all in that rut, man."

"I might as well be dead, Paul, dead, like a *** dog on the side of a road!"

Jake put his head in his arms on the dirty, dark booth. He wept and wept and when he finally lifted his head, Paul was gone.

"Rum and coke."

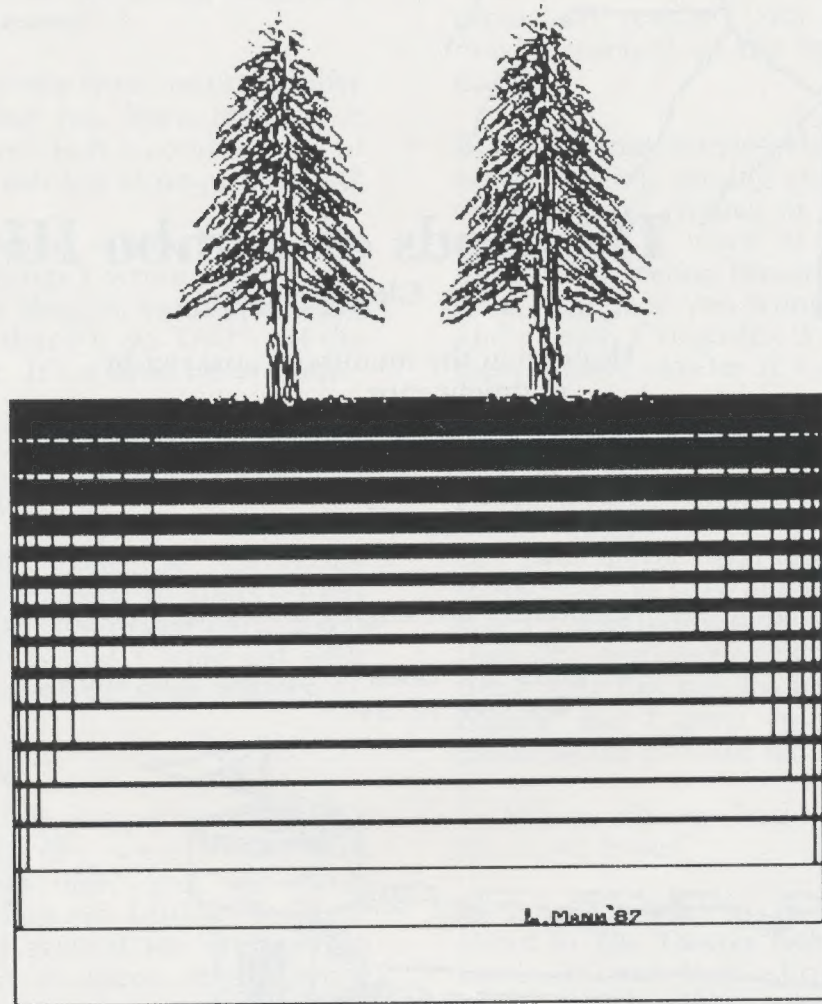
And as Jake sat there, looking around the American Bar, he looked towards the stage and heard the band playing, he saw the screaming crowd, he was God, man, God. The music was rising, pulsing in his heart, and as the song reached its climax, Jake leaped off the stage and as his high-heeled leather boots struck the floor, the blue spotlights of his eyes turned off, his face blackened, and soon all was invisible. In the remote corner of the bar, no one could be seen, he was no longer noticed. He was a no-face in the crowd.

And the clock on the wall sung, Tick, Tock, Tick, Tock, Tick, Tock . . .

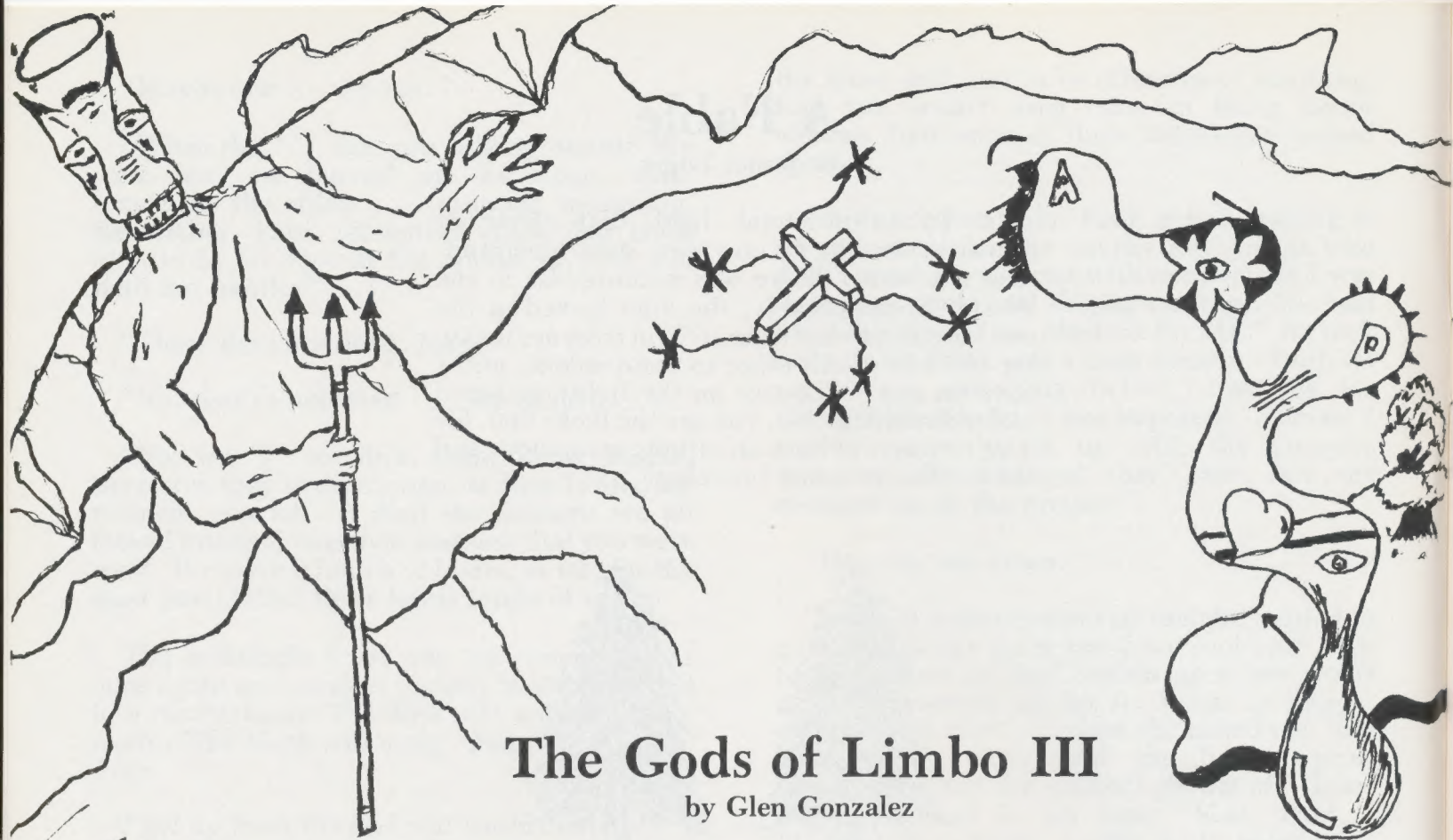
A Fable

by James López

In an infinitesimal field that stretched onwards, leading to nowhere, stood one man. And two trees. There was nothing else in the World. Feeling lonely, the man looked at the trees with envy and stated: "You trees are lucky, for you have each other as companions, and I have no one." The tree on the right, withered and old replied, "No, you are the lucky one, for it is far worse to have an infinite companion, and not be able to touch branches."



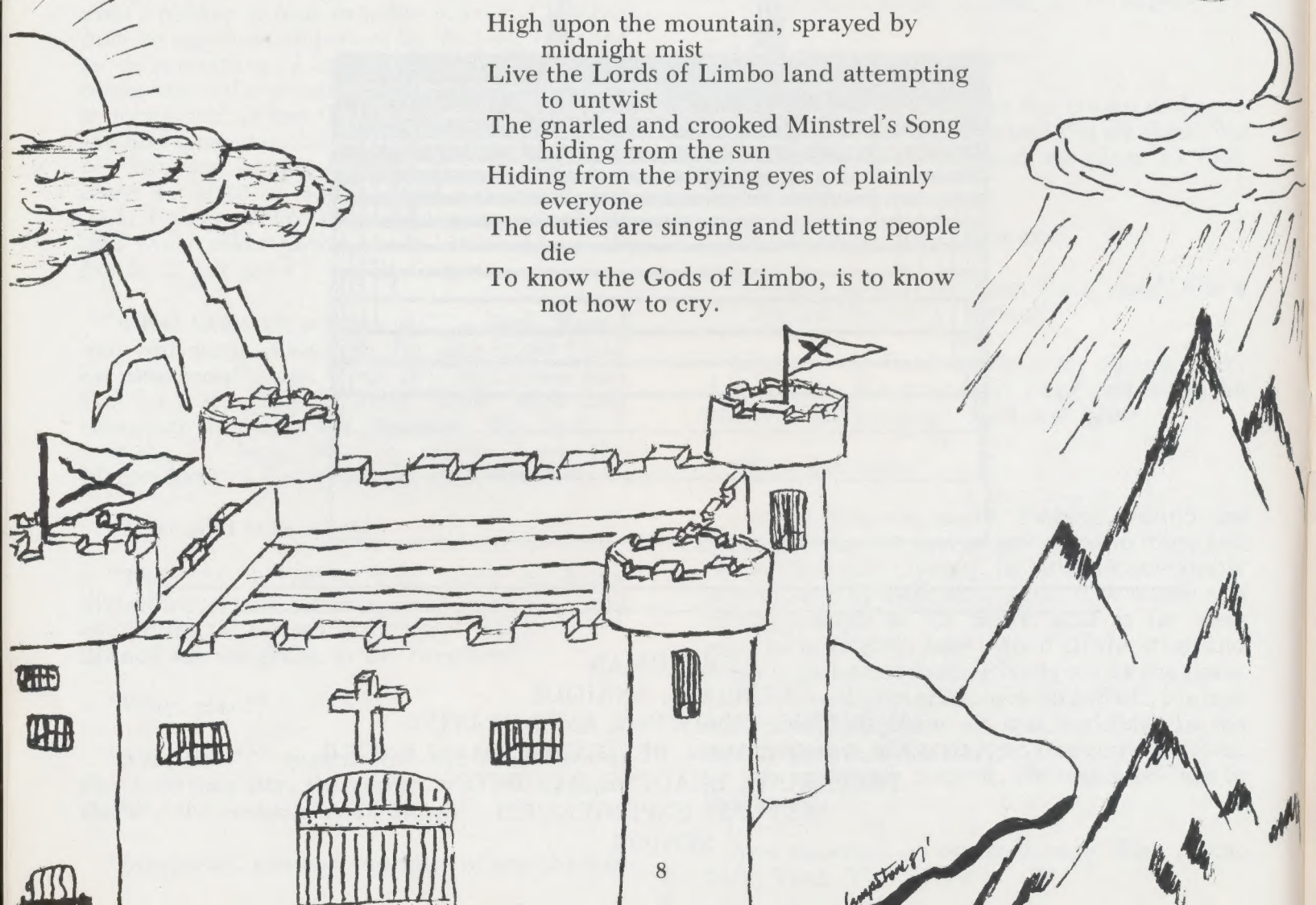
FRESHMAN
CURIOUS, ANXIOUS
ADJUSTING, GROWING, ANTICIPATING
STUDENT, YOUNG MAN, BELIEVER, CHALLENGER
PREPARING, LEADING, ACCEPTING
MATURE, EXPERIENCED
SENIOR



The Gods of Limbo III

by Glen Gonzalez

High upon the mountain, sprayed by
midnight mist
Live the Lords of Limbo land attempting
to untwist
The gnarled and crooked Minstrel's Song
hiding from the sun
Hiding from the prying eyes of plainly
everyone
The duties are singing and letting people
die
To know the Gods of Limbo, is to know
not how to cry.



An Interview with Danny Vilmure

by Andy Smith

Danny Vilmure graduated from Jesuit in 1983. While a student he was editor-in-chief of the Tiger, won the prose award of the Lyre, and received the Richard G. Hartnett Award for excellence in English studies. After graduation he attended Loyola University of New Orleans. After his sophomore year he transferred to Harvard University. He is having his first novel published by Knopf to be released in the late summer. Life In The Land of the Living is the story of two boys and their adventures over a twelve hour period. The following interview was conducted late January.

A: Does your writing come from natural ability or is it something that has been trained or developed on your own? Is it a combination of both or which do you think is more prominent?

B: I am sure it is probably a little bit of both. Sometimes I look at things I wrote when I was 16 and 17 and I think they're, technique-wise, better than things I'm doing now. That's not the case for the most part. It's a little bit of both.

A: Do you think that your affiliation with *The Lyre* and *The Tiger*, was able to help you develop your own style?

B: Yes, it was terrific. That was one of the things about Jesuit. There were so many outlets if you were a writer. One of the best parts about my writing at Jesuit was that I hung out with writers and I had friends who were writers.

A: To compare?

B: Yeah sure. Sort of like competition, but you know my best friends who were writers and were good, did it, they didn't just talk about it. And that rubbed off on me. I think *The Tiger* was the best training ground for my writing because I wrote two or three stories every month.

A: Knopf is a fairly prestigious publishing company. What was your reaction when they decided to publish your novel?

B: I was crazy, I couldn't believe it. I really didn't know Knopf was a good house until about the first week I sent my novel to Knopf. I sent it to Knopf because the teacher I first showed my novel to at Harvard, a writer named Mary Robison, is printed by Knopf. She suggested I send it there.

A: Is this the pinnacle of your writing career? Are you going to become a writer or are you going on to something else?

B: Well I hope I can publish more than one. It's a great thing, but you always worry that it came too early because it is the kind of thing you are looking for. You work towards a goal and you want to get something published, and then suddenly it happens.

A: So you worry maybe that at 21 you have not necessarily reached your highest potential but maybe reached all the success you're going to find?

B: No, I'm not worried about that. I hope I have better writing coming out of me and I think I stand a good chance of getting another book published if I work at it. I'm saying it's a bittersweet feeling because in one way you feel great. But then you wonder, I'm pretty young, and already I've gotten it. Maybe it would have been a little sweeter if I had a couple of years under my belt.

A: If you would have known what it was like to be a starving writer.

B: I've never starved. It's always been something I've been able to do over the summers when I was living with my parents. I've never been in a destitute situation. I mean it's a great thing and I'm not looking a gift horse in the mouth. But I guess you always wonder how much better it could be.

A: Where did you find the inspiration to write the novel from?

B: It was a news event that happened I read about in *The Tampa Tribune*. Some kid stole a bottle of liquor from a liquor store on my side of town. And he didn't get chased by the cops or anything. But when he was in flight from the package store, he fell down on a train track and the liquor bottle broke in his pants pocket and it cut an artery in his thigh or something like that and he bled to death. This kid was about 15 years old. I can't remember if I read the news article, this was about two or three years ago, or if I heard about it. But I thought "wow" what a great scene for a story. And sure enough I had this event in my mind as the climax of a tragic evening. So that was an inspiration.

A: About how long did it take you to write the novel?

B: I wrote this thing about two years ago. I wrote it summer of between my freshman/sophomore year and then the summer between my sophomore/junior year. I wrote the bulk of it during the summer of 1984, about the first 150 pages and then the second half of it in the summer of 1985. I wrote it in Tampa.

A: How did you maintain your level of concentration and discipline yourself to keep writing? I know when I try to write something long I can never get through it.

B: I don't know, I think in a lot of ways; this sounds bad, but I aim for quantity. I tell myself I got to have five pages done today and I got to have a hundred pages done in two months. It's terrible, but sometimes the things I write, I think of them as filler. I just want to get quantity out. Knowing that if I push myself and make myself write something is gonna come of it.

A: Instead of waiting for creative bursts?

B: Exactly and you know it's agony. You look at what you're writing and go this is terrible. But you have to force it out of yourself anyway. Maybe it will be good or maybe it won't. But I don't usually have problems with writing. I just kind of sit down and go to it.

A: In your subject matter, did you draw from personal experiences?

B: Yes, you can't help but do that. But I think the type of experience I draw from is more a visual or just the way the novel looks and the scenes correspond with the landscape of my part of Tampa. But as far as it being autobiographical in any way. Not at all, because the parents, I don't want to call them nasty individuals, because they are good individuals, but they are like the opposite of what my parents are and the brothers are the opposite of what my brothers are. So personally, I don't see any resemblance in the characters and even people I know. But I think there is a real strong correspondence between my life and the territory they wonder around in, the people they talk to. There is a lot of Tampa in it.

A: Do you think in some ways, whether intentionally or not intentionally, the parents of these two boys sort of represent the lack of family and the morals that have gone wrong with a lot of parents?

B: I guess so. I wouldn't want to say it's a

symbol for parents everywhere. I think it is just an individual case. I think it is a lot like how I described I write. I sit down and I do it.

A: Do you think that maybe in the future, say 20 years down the road, people are gonna look back at music from our generation and say that the lyrics are great literature and great poetry?

B: I think it's inevitable. I think it should be. It should be studied in an academic setting. As long as it is studied well. Can you imagine the nightmares that you would have as a professor?

A: It's like trying to cram two hundred years of history in their semester.

B: I would say it influences writers from my generation and probably the last two decades.

A: Upton Sinclair once said that when he was talking about how hard it was to write the great American novel.

B: People say "When is someone gonna write the great American Epic? Because America doesn't actually have an epic. Italy does. Rome and Greece. My professor suggested well what's the great American epic and would it even be a novel? Could it be something like *Gone with the Wind*? I can't think of a novel that would be epic, but it could be a record, a film or anything. I'm always more moved, with the exception of a few writers, by rock n' roll and by film than I am by literature.

A: It encompasses so many more of your senses.

B: It's more of a rush.

A: It's something I think generations before us cannot relate to at all. My parents are brilliant people. They don't care for it at all. They can't understand or relate to it.

If you find yourself in a situation where maybe you want to keep writing the way you want to write but monetarily you can't, would you consider selling yourself out to keep yourself going?

B: Yeah sure anything is possible when you are hungry enough. But I haven't, I lie, I have already tried to do that. I've tried to write a few *New Yorker* type stories to get into a really good magazine like *The New Yorker* with a short story. So this Christmas I sat down and deliberately tried to write what I conceive of as a *New Yorker* Christmas story and I fell flat on my face. They didn't like it and it wasn't a good story. So I guess there is a degree to which you can do that successfully. You can compromise

yourself successfully. I haven't found a way to do that yet. Until I'm hungry, I'm just going to do what I want to do and do it with integrity, and if I have to or I'm hungry enough I suppose I am capable of it.

A: It seems like in the 80's and 70's there doesn't seem to be a lot of subject matter that jumps out and grabs you to write about. I was thinking like starting back with the Depression and Kerovac in the late 50's early 60's. Do you think writers nowadays have to go through their imaginations to find things to write about?

B: The thing that surprised me is there seems to be so many things to write about. So many movies. Vital things like the bomb. If you're a writer, how could you not address the bomb, how could you avoid it? The things we did from my generation, you don't directly address issues that are important like that. I don't know, maybe you're right because I am having a hard time thinking of things. I don't have a hard time thinking of things. I don't have a hard time addressing topics I think are important. I guess it's a question of what you think is important. That wasn't a very good answer.

A: That's O.K., it wasn't a very good question.

B: No, it was a terrific question. What do you think? You don't think writers have a lot to write about?

A: Oh, I think you're right. There is too much to write about, because a good writer can write about anything. I think there are going to be more sensational events coming up, because I think we are going to see a definite change in the 1990's. One because it seems like it's going that way and also it seems like performance movements go in cycles. 1900's, 1930's, 1960's. Because like what you are writing about; you're two kids running around at night and you don't necessarily need a sensationalistic event to write about.

B: I guess what we are looking for are political issues.

A: Yeah. Or something like the Okies going to California.

B: We don't have a World War II, instead we have a cold war, and we don't have a great depression. But I don't know, you have El Salvador and the whole Middle East. ☹

Untitled

by Anonymous

She dances to her reflection in the window
Fast and silent she slips across the room

She lives there somewhere in the corner of your eye.
You never quite get a good look at her.

And you said to me in an old song
"If you took a good look at my face
You'd see my smile looks out of place"

She goes away.
You never see her leave.
She doesn't understand.

I walk in the city with my friends.
I try to forget in the commotion.

"I saw you walking out Shaftsbury Avenue
Excuse me talking I wanna marry you."

I'll be there in the end, I don't know why.
I'll try to understand
I'll try to smile
I'll try to hide, but it'll come out.
I love you, but I don't think you know it.

She looks around to find a face she can like
She sees no one . . .
. . . Out of the corner of her eye she sees him there.

He goes away
She never saw him leave

Sometimes we don't know
Can't understand
Can't comprehend
Even though we try to
And sometimes we can do nothing about it.

Diary

by Lance Kane

Sunday - October 19, 1986

Everytime I start to write in this thing, I feel like a little girl. But the shrink said to do it, so I'm giving it a shot. Boy, this is difficult! I mean trying to put all of my feelings down on paper. I really don't care if anybody ever reads this or not.

I'm starting to hate life again because everything reminds me of my son, Bobby, and how he died. It is a pretty terrible thing. I mean my son being hit by a car and dying. What's even worse and what's driving me crazy is that I killed him. I was the driver. Everything really reminds me of him too. A classic example is just now when I wrote "boy" and it shot hot, stinging images back onto my mind's eye. The most horrifying image is the one in which I remember the look on my son's face when the station wagon threw him back as it hit. I'm pretty much a very depressed guy, huh Diary. I mean I used to have bad thoughts about what it would be like to be the cause of anyone's death. I never dreamt I'd find out and much less about my own son. Pretty horrible isn't it? It's now been two weeks and 6 days since the accident. For the first two weeks I couldn't even eat or sleep much less write in this petty thing. I don't like to think about my wife because she reminds me of Bobby and it's probably the same for her. She likes to refer to our splitting up as temporary, But I think it's forever.

I can't stop thinking about suicide sometimes even though I know I could never do it. My parents, God bless 'em, raised me to believe that if you committed suicide, then you would go to hell. So I'm sort of trying to not think about suicide and how hateful life is. I've been thinking and I hope that one day I'll die normally and put a long awaited end to this miserable remembrance of my son. Then I'll be in heaven with Bobby. I know he's in Heaven because where else would he be. What kind of sinning can a five year old do to merit being sent to hell. I don't know. I'm getting tired of this book though and at times wish I were dead.

Monday - October 20, 1986

I've just realized as I take this book out that it has been two weeks and some odd days since I've been to work. They're still paying me and I've got money so I'm not starving, but none of that matters. The money, the apartment, and all of that mean nothing to me anymore. If I could get Bobby back I would give anything. Bobby and my wife were my entire life before the accident. Now I can't have either of them. At first, I figured my wife would bring some happiness, but all she brought were memories.

Wednesday - October 22, 1986

Dear Diary! Ha!Ha! What a way to start! I really must be a basket case or something. Why else would the shrink make me write in this damn book. He said it helps to realize my feelings and to express them, but I think it just depresses me.

You'd be pretty surprised, my being sort of a christian, how much I got upset with God. I really started to question whether or not God loved me and whether or not there really was a God. I sort of am sure that he's there, but I wonder what I did to cause such punishment. What did I do, or what did my parents do to cause God to let Bobby die? Did we ever do anything that bad? Hell no!!! Why does it seem that God doesn't care anymore? These thoughts and questions make me want to commit suicide and put an end to this horrible merry-go-round called life.

Thursday - October 23, 1986

Last night the nightmares came again. The one where Bobby walks, actually limps, up to me and asks why didn't occur, but the others did. As always I awoke suddenly and was bedraggled with perspiration. Last night I bawled after the nightmares until morning. The vision of Bobby's face etched in my mind caused terrible pain which the pills the shrink gave me couldn't even help. Finally after a couple of hours, I got up and went out.

Friday, October 24, 1986

The drugs and the coke haven't been working as well since a couple of days ago. When I first started, they would relieve some of the depression but mainly I would get so blasted I'd just pass out. Then when I woke up it would be even worse. So I've decided to quit the drugs. They're a false high anyway and I'll always be the same murderer anyway.

Monday - October 27, 1986

As a final resort today, I decided to go back to work. It was a final resort to get Bobby off my mind. The exact opposite is what occurred though, everything seemed to remind me of him. Even though I took a cab, the cab reminded me of how he was killed. I was sort of able to ignore these subtle reminders. However, the real heavy shock of remembering came to me as I entered my office and sat at my desk. How ridiculously stupid of my fellow workers to leave the picture of my wife, Bobby, and myself on my desk. They could've at least put it inside my desk. They had to know that it would upset me. I would have thought of it had it happened to someone else.

I was starting to forget about things and do my work when I realized that I was habitually waiting for my wife to call. This reminded me of Bobby because every day my wife and I would talk and usually his name was mentioned. God, I loved that kid more than anything else in the whole world and for some reason I don't have him anymore. I've thought that it could have been some weird kind of luck or fate but those things aren't responsible for running people's lives. It was useless to try to go back to work. I'm a weak person. I believe God gives hardships to those people who can best handle them. I know that God must have misunderstood me because this is too much for me to handle. I can't go on much longer like this.

Tuesday - October 28, 1986

Last night I decided that today I'm going to do something about all my problems. I woke up in the middle of one of my normal blood-curdling nightmares and again I began to sob. I finally stopped myself and realized this can't go on, I'm slowly dying. Knowing that nothing could keep my mind off Bobby and that I would die anyway, I've decided to commit suicide. I plan on jumping off my office building downtown. The jump can't last that long until you hit the ground and everything blacks out. I know it's not right, but I can't stand it any longer. I thought about going to hell and all but I realized that I'm in a living hell of guilt right now, so how much worse could it be. I know God must not like quitters, but I don't care because if God cared about me, he wouldn't have put me in this predicament so my final decision is to end my misery by killing myself.

Writing this has made me realize though that if I commit suicide then I won't ever have my one last hope achieved. The hope I am talking about is to die and go to heaven and see Bobby again. But who knows what heaven's like. He could be waiting for me right now, but then again who knows if there really is a heaven or hell. It could be just a bunch of hogwash some creative people made up to motivate others to keep living. I really think I'm just going to end it all, but what about Bobby. ☹





L. Mann

SHADES

by Craig Ellis

There are shadows on the road, Shadows in the mind.
Life is normal - all things in equilibrium
The Sun glares down, a setting for normality
We dress brightly in acqua and grigio
-Colors light up our world, for fashion is king
Now we need a cover-up SHADES.
Lightless caverns of our minds - zombies of fashion.
We advertise ourselves without personality.
What are we afraid of?
SHADES steel doors closing our minds
SHADES humans turned blind
SHADES for we fear the light.

BREAK OUT

See the light
Look inside yourself
Be human
Let me see your eyes
We are creatures of love-nude (nude) - before love
Dress by your heart and soul not by bastardized brain.

GRIEF

by Craig D. Ellis

A lot of things have happened to me.

I found out in class today that I'm brainwashed.

I learned my rights.

I know what it is to be HEARTSICK AND TO LOVE
SOMEONE WITHOUT THE POWER TO EXPRESS
THAT LOVE AND WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A
GROWN MAN AND CRY . . .

I learned grief today. I learned the hate I conceal in my paranoia
and neurosis.

I learned what I missed because I was too cautious
about being controlled by a girl, a femme fatale.

(My heart aches)

(It aches because the love I've found I can't touch)

(NE(YE(For months)ARS)VER)

Anybody want to be a racist today? How about sexist?

We could give those stupid fags a hard time for fun . . .

We conformed

The thing we think we're gloriously revolting against
we've peacefully gone with and kept joyous smiles on
our faces while it nails us into our coffin and spat in
our mouth.

(Don't worry; he's doing this for attention, he wants to think
he's being intense.) (It's only a phase, It's only a phase,
It's only a phase, It's only a phase, It's only a phase,
It's only a phase, It's only a phase.)

Yours truthfully,
Craig D. Ellis



L. Mann

A Stranger

by Adam Garber

I do not know who's in my house,
Perhaps in the night a stranger,
For I know it could not be a little mouse,
That surely would not be a danger.
The noise I heard when sound asleep,
A quick rattle and then a crash.
In my fight I dare not peep,
Just hope the stranger would make a dash.
In shock I covered my face,
Hiding under my pillow and sheet.
If kin were here, I'd feel disgrace
But hurry to my feet.

I'd laugh out loud, "How are you dear?"
Pretending never to know that awful fear.

CONFORMITY!

by Craig Ellis

CONFORMITY!
WE ARE TEENS!
DON'T MESS WITH US, JERKS!
GET OUT OF OUR WAY!

(No)

WHAT? WHO DEFIES US!? WE'RE BAD!!

(I do)

WAIT! THAT WAS FROM HIM! A GOON!
WHY AREN'T YOU COOL?!? AREN'T YOU A REBEL?!

(Yes)

THEN WHAT'S THE MATTER? GOON!

(You're dirt)

US?

(You're all shells)

(Souless shells)

Little men You're all Little MEN. BOYS
LOOKS WHO'S TALKING! WE GOT CARS! WE GOT MONEY
AND WE DON'T HAVE A CURFEW AND WE GET DRUNK AND WE . . .

(Fools. Headstrung-simple-immature fools.)

WE'RE ALL STRAIGHT AND DON'T WEAR STUPID COSTUMES
LIKE YOU! GOON! GET ROCKIN!!!

And yet we love our freedom of speech

our freedom of . . .

ours . . .

. . . as long as it isn't theirs.



tampa
America's Next Great City: The *Lyre* Photo Essay



Study in Freud



Yuppie discipline



One way



Two streets



Better days



Law and Order



Jose Gaspar: Pirate, Rapist, Tampa Hero



Monday



A parking plot



"Baby on Board"



, . . . at home in Port Tampa



The "Real Thing"?



Blue collars, yellow fruit



"Poetry Without Words"



Sculpture Yard 206



Conclusion

By Jim Marshall, Clayton Sinyai, and Leighton Mann

Legacy of Shame

by Clayton Sinyai

Early this year well over one hundred concerned citizens spent time in confinement after civil disobedience surrounding the Trident II missile program. Needless to say, at Jesuit this supplication fell on deaf ears.

Why? Because Jesuit *is* the arms race.

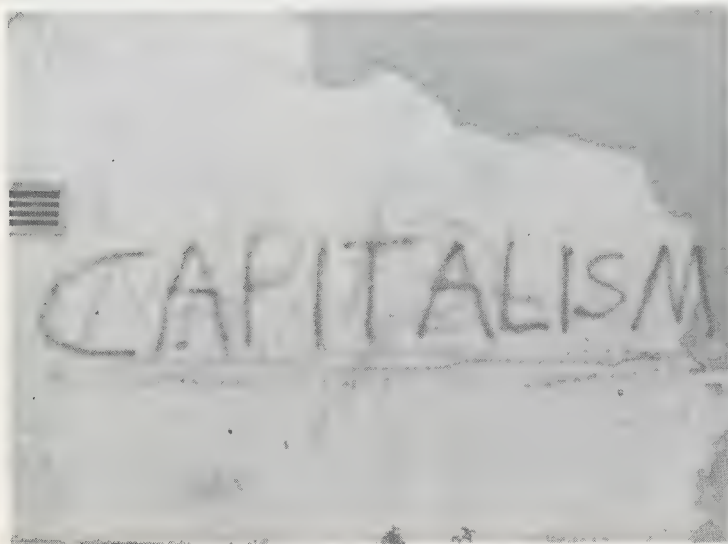
In perhaps four, perhaps six, perhaps eight years from our graduation, Jesuit students will walk (stalk?) the corridors of power. We, the distilled product of our society, the best and the brightest (or at least the richest) will cleverly sidestep the entire proletarian experience by acquiring our bourgeoisie goal of wealth, management, and command. Along with a handful of other elitists we will assume control over upcoming decades. We will inherit a world of poverty, grief, cruelty, and death - and utilize our considerable energies to retard beneficial change.

As the rising capitalist class, we will have much to gain by furthering the oppression of the laborer. We will maintain unemployment in order not to pay our workers a decent wage. We will structure our tax laws so that the cost of arms race is taken from the common man. We will perpetuate the arms race and "Red Fever" forever to facilitate the transfer of the meager earnings of the poor to greedy corporate leaders - i.e., ourselves. We will sponsor tyrannical, murderous puppet regimes in every region of the globe, and if they rise up against us, we will conscript our own working class to slaughter them. We are the architects of a world order based on exploitation and sin.

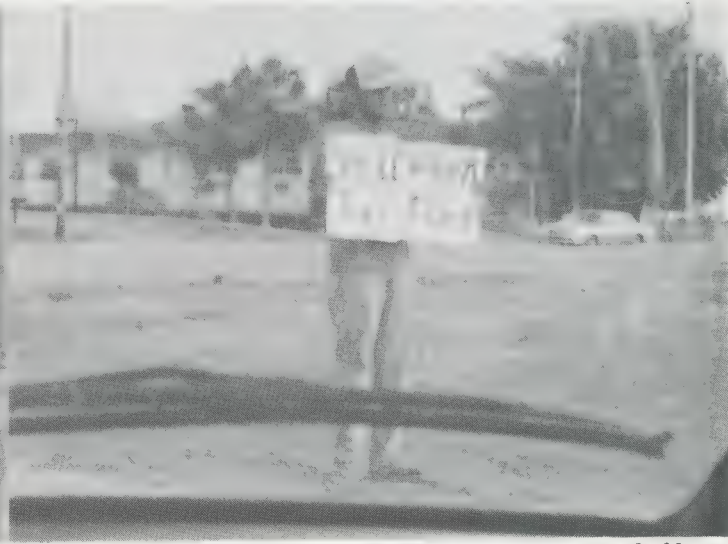
All this is historically documented and undeniable. In many nations like our own, the same plutocrats have controlled the people for hundreds of years. In those where, through revolution, the proletariat has aspired to more, he discovered for himself only a new set of oppressors. What is politically heinous about our crime, however, is that we will label it "Christian." We will, and do, invoke God's name as we cheat, lie, and intentionally kill the millions under our power. Thus the "priveleged class" will ever remain just that, while Marx's "opiate of the masses," religion, will hold the people in its sway.

From this point of view, it is easy to understand Ronald Reagan's popularity at Jesuit - he is a most fitting symbol for our decade and ourselves. In our name he converts the suppression of Vietnam into a "noble cause"; he creates an exponential arms race that supercedes Kennedy's; his fiscal politics threaten greater economic carnage than Coolidge wrought; his union policy is more criminal than Cleveland's; and finally, he constructs a pyramid of oppressive regimes so vile that they would have made Metternich and Tamerlane blush.

When we honestly search our souls, we find what Jesuit truly is - it is this. Perhaps one day when man is FREE, our school and accompanying mall and office complex will stand as a museum, a relic of an elitist class that no longer is. Far more likely, however, we will successfully forge our own legacy of shame. ☹



L. Mann



L. Mann

One and Eight

by Robert Pelaez

Theorize with me for a moment. Can someone who has everything and wants more, change? What would cause this change? Does someone turn on a light in his head? What makes someone who takes all his life suddenly decide to give? Maybe he becomes aware that giving enriches a little more than taking. It is hard to realize that people need you until you realize that you need people.

I have changed. My life, once filled with greed, is now filled with love. I realized in one day that my life needed a change. This is my story.

I left the gym feeling hot. Sweat rolled down my forehead into my eyes. My car, my escape, taunted me from the distance. I ran to it, threw my books into the back seat, and turned the key. A tape was playing. It was something by Huey Lewis, I think. I rolled down the window on my side of the car to let the breeze in while The News crooned in the background. The air was hot, but it felt good against my wet face.

I don't remember listening to the music. My mind was elsewhere. I was thinking about something that had been said at the pep rally I had just left. There a student yelled, "Tonight's game is all that matters." How can anyone think that I would believe that? These guys throw a football around and expect me to worship them.

Pep rallies had previously excited me. They were chances to scream and show school spirit. Our team that year had won a single game in eight attempts, yet I still saw the captain convince three hundred spectators that we were no doubt the best team in the world. I didn't fall for it. As an outsider this time, I watched. I watched as the speaker instilled hatred for the opponent in all who cheered on.

As I pulled away from the paved parking lot, cars more expensive than many houses passed me. I, too, drove an expensive automobile. It was a gift from someone who loved me very much.

The needle of my gas gauge lay on empty and a gas station was ahead, so I pulled in. A bell rang inside to tell of my arrival. A man covered with grease asked if he could help me. I told him I wanted the super-unleaded gas in my tank and he complied. My oil was low, too. I loved full-service. When the dirty laborer had finished, he took the credit card my father had given me and asked me to sign something. He was polite to insure my return. I sped off, leaving the gas station in a cloud of dust.

The 7-11 was my next stop. As I walked in, an arab, or a muslim, or something stared at me from behind the counter. His dark skin and the turbin on his head gave him the semblance of Khaddafi, of Ghaddaffi, or whatever. I could have grabbed a six-pack of Bud. My pals at school would have been proud of me. What amazes me is that so many people argue about the drinking age when there really isn't one. Anyone anywhere can get alcohol if he wants it enough. Why argue?

Anyway, instead of getting the beer, I walked over to one of those self-serve beverage things and snatched a giant cup. I hated self-service. I filled the cup with ice and Mountain Dew and slid back up to the counter. The arab took my dollar and rang me up. He handed me my change and asked me if I would put the money in the jar for Jerry's kids. I told him Jerry should be able to take care of his own kids and walked out sipping my Mountain Dew. I didn't get far. Something compelled me to turn around. I went back inside through the glass doors and put the thirty-two cents in the jar. It wasn't much, but it was a big deal to me. I gave something that was rightfully mine to someone else.

As I approached my home, my stomach was full of soda and so was the front of my shirt. Scared that the little man on the little horse would drown, I accelerated to his safety. When I arrived home, my mind recalled a terrifying truth. The garage-door opener had been broken. The pure agony of life. The suffering children were put through was unbearable.

After exerting more energy than I thought I possessed, I returned to my car and pulled in. Another startling conclusion came to mind. I was going to have to lower the door. Where's a maid when you need one? I moved the door without complaints or profound statements this time.

My parents had left me that weekend for the first time in my troubled life. I walked up the oak stairs, sat on my bed, and considered my options. My list included a party, sex, and other teenage pastimes. After all, I was a teenager. Then another idea hit me.

I wish it hadn't. Somebody somewhere must have been controlling my thoughts. The idea of responsibility struck me right in the heart. I was off guard. I tried to shrug it off, but it stuck to me. Why this weekend? It stung. "Monday. Monday I'll start being responsible," I told myself. I couldn't take it anymore.

I took off my stained shirt. I didn't think we'd be able to save the poor man on the poor horse. "I knew I should have worn the alligator today. He would have made it. Alligators swim much better than polo ponies." I joked with myself often. No one else appreciated my humor. I wasn't very funny.

I needed someone to talk to. I needed someone to understand me. My friends weren't really friends. They were just a bunch of guys that didn't mind that I was partially insane. I wished that I had a girlfriend, but girls mostly take a guy just to show him off. They didn't like me much anyway.



Posters lined the walls of my room. Someone once told me that he read that the state of a person's room tells a lot about that person. My room was screaming, "He's a slob! He's a slob!" I didn't spend much time in my room, yet it was the messiest room in the house. It was November, but the "Miami Vice" calendar on the wall read October. I changed it.

When I needed someone to talk then, I talked to my fish. I know that sounds useless, but it wasn't. My fish listened without criticizing, complaining, or ordering. Not many people I knew could do that. Red flowed from his fins like lava from a volcano. I was going to call him St. Helen like that volcano in Washington, but I didn't think he would appreciate a girl's name. I called him Otis instead.

I laughed, momentarily, as I considered the similarities of our lifestyles. We had much in common. He was alone, as was I. He needed companionship, as did I. We both had surrounding boundaries to keep us prisoner. He was trapped for life. I, too, would be trapped, unless an escape was found quickly. To find as escape, I first needed to define the walls that confined me. I realized that the only confinement that held me was my own self-indulgence, my own greed. To cut the ropes that secured me to myself would only take the realization that I was not the Messiah. I was not the center of the universe. People were not put on earth to serve, nor I to rule them.

My life was easy and I knew it. I could live

this way until I died if I wished. For the first time I didn't want to. All that time I was living easy, I was living unhappy. The only person I could talk to was a fish named after a 60's blues singer. I was in bad shape. I treated people like dirt and received respect from no one.

That day I let everything out that I had been denying for so long. I fed Otis and took a shower. I needed to change my clothes, my life. How could I? How could I change?

Change cannot be produced in one day. It is possible though, to change. I am better today for the changes I made yesterday and will be better tomorrow for the changes I make today. ☹



A Lousy Christmas

by David Lee

T'was the night before Christmas
And all through the house
Not a creature was stirring . . .
Except for a Louse,

This louse briskly paced
About a child's head
As he waited for Santa
To arrive in his sled.

He did not believe in Santa
And so wished to see
The fat man he considered
A great fantasy.

He got tired of waiting
And left the child's head,
Scurried over a pillowcase,
And jumped off the bed.

A cold draft reminded him
On his way down the hall
That it was now wintertime;
It was no longer fall.

He entered the family room
and what should he see
But the multivariegated lights
Blinking on a great tree

As he entered the kitchen
He saw on the shelf
Some milk and two cookies
For Santa himself.

On a counter he rested
And stared into night.
He glanced at the clock,
It was ten till midnight

The stars twinkled brightly
With the moon in the sky
As the little louse sat there
And watched the snow fly.

The louse gazed with wonder
And was flooded with mirth
As he saw sheets of snow
put a blanket on the earth.

Then suddenly the bells chimed;
It was now twelve o'clock,
And in the far distance
He discerned a dark blot.

As the small blot came nearer
It got bigger and bigger
Till the louse could make out
The details of the figure.

His mouth dropped agape
As he looked on with awe.
Could Santa Claus really
exist after all?

There was no doubt about it;
He could see the great sled,
The nine flying reindeer,
And fat man in red

With wonder in his eyes
And a smile on his face
The louse went to wait
By the fireplace.

Santa entered through the chimney;
As he fell down the hole,
The louse heard him bellow
A "Yo-ho-ho-ho!"

With great commotion
As he entered the house,
The fat man accidentally
Came down on the louse.

How could he miss?
His foot was so fat.
All one could hear
Was a loud-and-clear "Splat!"

A foot was the last thing
The louse would ever see.
What a terrible Christmas
It turned out to be.

Santa dropped off his gifts
And left the quiet house
Without paying attention
to the little dead louse.

And the town heard him cry
As he flew through the ice,
"Merry Christmas to all
And may no one get lice!"

The Bus Stop

by David Camacho

It was a cool, crisp Florida winter day. The temperature was around fifty degrees. I love the weather on days like that.

I was on my way to the mall after a particularly hard day at school. I had poofed on an English paper that I had spent hours on. Although it didn't bother me too much (grades never did), I realized that it would bring my average down about six points. Forget it, I told myself, you'll get an A anyway. I don't like to think about school when I'm not in it. But then again, you should see the way some of the kids at school react when they poof. Geez, you'd think it was the end of the world or something. Not me though, I'm not like those guys. You should hear the way they talk: What college are you going to? Oh, they're all right, but I think the University of blah, blah is the best. I plan to study . . . etc. You'd think the pansies have the next twenty years of their lives mapped out or something. And the teachers encourage them, for heaven's sake. I don't know, maybe they're right. Maybe I'm just acting immature. Personally, I think the priests and novices have the right idea. They go wherever they're told, no questions asked. They're like leaves, blowing anywhere the wind takes them. Enough of that stuff. Let's get back to the story.

So there I was, on my way to the mall to catch a bus. My watch read three-thirty. I had a half hour wait until the next bus, so I decided to go to the bookstore to kill some time.

As I entered the bookstore, I noticed some kids looking at the girlie magazines. They must be freshmen, I thought to myself. Yeah, they were just standing there getting their kicks. I felt sorry for the freshmen. One day they'll look back and say, Gee, I must have looked like a total goon. And that goes for those grown-up

freshmen, too. Because in the real world, women aren't silent bodies in a magazine. They're walking, talking, and breathing human beings, and a lot of those grown-up freshmen are scared to death of them.

I walked to where the music books were and pulled out the book about Pink Floyd. I started to leaf through it, like I had done a hundred times before. I had contemplated buying the thing, but fourteen bucks seemed a little too much for a book. I didn't feel like reading much, so I put the book back and left the bookstore.

I looked at my watch. I still had twenty minutes left. I decided to go ahead and wait at the bus stop in the rare case that my bus should come early. I walked towards the back of the mall to where the bus stop was. I looked at all the different stores and noticed all the fascinating mall stuff. For example, the suspender vendor had a new hairstyle.

I arrived at the bus stop and looked around for a place to sit down. There was an opening on one of the benches by this really grubby looking guy. I didn't particularly feel like standing up for twenty minutes, so I sat down next to him.

He was a short, husky man. He looked as if he hadn't shaved or bathed in a week. I felt a little sorry for the guy. I knew he was probably a homeless person. At the same time, I didn't particularly care to have the honor of sitting next to him, you know? You can well imagine my surprise when, out of the blue, he started a conversation with me.

"What bus are you waiting for?" he asked timidly.



I really didn't think it was any of his business what bus I was riding, so I lied to him. "Bus number fourteen," I replied.

"I suppose you go to school around here, huh?"

"Jesuit." Geez, that was dumb thing to say, I thought to myself. I had read about kids my age being kidnapped by deranged psychos, and I didn't want to be one of them. Part of me wanted to get up and walk away, but another part told me that this guy was probably just lonely and wanted someone to listen to him.

"I used to go to some of the Jesuit football games, yeah. By the way, my name's Bill. It's not really that great of a name, huh?"

"It's an all right name." Now I definitely felt like getting up and leaving. But if I left now, I thought, he'd probably follow me or something.

"I tell you, I'm not too popular of a guy. You see, I've got this problem. To be frank, see, I wet my bed."

Something inside of me let out a groan. "You see," Bill continued, "I was in the army, stationed in Panama. Anyway, it was a small village, probably not more than five hundred people. Well one night, see, some of the guys had brought some of the local girls on the base, which isn't allowed. They were breaking the rules, see. Well, the night before I had an accident. To be honest, I wet my bed." He started to quiver. "And I was outside the barracks, drying my mattress. It was late at night, so I didn't think anyone would see me. Anyway, those girls sort of saw what I was doing and started to laugh and call me names."

I thought he was going to cry.

Bill continued, "You can't trust women. They lie about everything. Before long, all the guys found out and started to make jokes and stuff. I left the next day and never went back." He began to rock back and forth.

My bus came. I got up and left Bill there on the bench, rocking away. I don't think he even noticed when I walked away.

The next day at school I recounted what happened at the bus stop to a bunch of guys. They all cracked up when I got to the bedwetting part of the story. I tried to laugh along with them, but I couldn't. To tell you the truth, it wasn't really that funny. ☹

Untitled

by Jim Marshall

Daddy, build me my red wagon.
You were doing it today, but the doctor came over
I know you're in pain.

Daddy build me my red wagon.
I'm gonna shoot a cannon up to God.
Mommy and I both cried today.

Daddy build me my red wagon 'cause
I'm seven now and have a new father.

Daddy I'm eight now and have a new brother!
'n mommy says we're gonna have another!

Dad I'm sixteen and I'm almost a man.
I wonder how things could have been . . .

I'm twenty now and a man
Now I see the circle of life
I almost tried to join you last night.

I'm twenty-five now
I don't wonder anymore
But sometimes I still feel the pain
Daddy build me my little red wagon.



Mike Speilberger

Audubon in Florida

November 15, 1831: Departed Charleston
November 20, 1831: Arrived St. Augustine
March 5, 1832: Departed St. Augustine for Charleston
April 19, 1832: Departed Charleston for Florida Keys
April 25, 1832: Arrived Indian Key
May 4, 1832: Arrived Key West
May 31, 1832: Departed Indian Key for Charleston

Audubon's travels in Florida began in November, 1831, in St. Augustine which he described as "doubtless the poorest village I have seen in America" and as "the poorest hole in the Creation -- The living very poor and very high -- was it not for the fishes in the Bay and a few thousand of oranges that grow immediately around the Village, the people must undoubtedly abandon it or starve for they are all too lazy to work, or if they work at such a price as puts it out of the question to employ them. Game and fish, it is true, are abundant; but the body of valuable tillable land is too small to enable the peninsula ever to become a rich state."

In his letters, Audubon mentioned sojourns with General Hernandez, John Bulow, and Orlando Rees (Spring Garden). He travelled no farther east than Lake George. After leaving Bulow, he set sail for Jacksonville to access the St. Johns River. Gale winds forced them back to St. Augustine. A second attempt to travel the St. Johns met with disaster when a crewmember was accidentally shot; Audubon left the ship and walked back to St. Augustine. He eventually determined to return to Charleston in order to find transportation to southern Florida. He recalled that as a child he had pictured Florida as a garden state but found it to be anything but that ("everything that is not sand, sand, sand, is mud, mud, mud").



John James Audubon. **Osprey or Fish Hawk**, 1829,
Collection of Joel and Jean Mattison.
Photo: George Holzer.

In April, 1832, Audubon again left Charleston for Florida, aboard the U.S. Revenue Cutter, *The Marion*, bound for the Florida Keys. When he eventually arrived at Key West, he was met by Dr. Benjamin Strobel, a friend of John Bachman (from Charleston). Strobel described Audubon as "a very extraordinary man. An acquaintance of half an hour enabled me to enter at once into his character and feelings. Divested of everything like pedantry, he is frank, free and amiable in his dispositions, and affable and polite in manners. His engaging manner and mild deportment enables him to accomplish many things, which to another person would be unattainable; every one appears to enlist at once in his service, and to be disposed to promote his views. In addition to the possession of these qualities, Mr. Audubon is the most enthusiastic and indefatigable man I ever knew. It is impossible to associate with him without catching some portion of his spirit; he is surrounded with an atmosphere which infects all who come within it, with a mania for bird-killing and bird-stuffing."

Strobel's description of an excursion with Audubon gives us a good idea of what Audubon went through every day: The party met at half-past two (a.m.) and left in two boats at three o'clock. They circled two or three small islands and then moved on, finding nothing of note on them. At the next island, they went ashore and hauled the boats over land for about a mile before they could be floated again. They searched for shells for an hour along the shore and then moved on, "leaving not a pond, lake, or bay unexplored." By eight o'clock, the sun became very hot, and they went to the woods to escape its rays, only to be driven out by mosquitoes and sandflies. Although they could not find any birds worthy of note, "Mr. Audubon was neither dispirited by heat, fatigue, nor bad luck, whilst we began to lag, and occasionally would dodge under some tree, to catch a breath, or sit down to blow. We toiled along in this way for several miles, and finally reached the Light House, tolerably well broken down. I gladly accepted of the use of a horse, whilst the rest of the party returned to town in a boat."

Strobel went on to recount that Audubon busied himself with drawing both before and after dinner, and in the evening he was "on the hunt again."

Audubon's Florida travels added some 52 birds to his portfolio, although the exact number is difficult to determine since many drawings begun in Florida in 1831/2 were not completed until nearly a half-dozen years later, and some nearly ubiquitous species are difficult to tie down to any particular place or date. Although he was evidently disappointed in some of his Florida experiences, some of his personal qualities as described by Dr. Strobel led him to summarize his feelings about the Keys: "But the scarcer the fruit, the more prized it is; and seldom have I experienced greater pleasures than when on the Florida Keys, under a burning sun, after pushing my bark for miles over a soapy flat, I have striven all day long, tormented by myriads of insects, to procure a heron new to me, and have at length succeeded in my efforts. And then how amply are the labours of the naturalist compensated, when, after observing the wildest and most distrustful birds, in their remote and almost inaccessible breeding places, he returns from his journeys, and relates his adventures to an interested and friendly audience." 🐦

John James Audubon, *Common Gull*, 1832, Collection of Joel and Jean Mattison.
Photo: George Holzer.



I'll Not Be Your Home

by Andy Smith

O bloated, raptureless symphony
Why must you tempt me
You catch not my thoughts
Nor even the shallow dragons of my soul
What is my price of guarded freedom
I think it be trite, never perfect

Caught by the tempo of the evening
And the celestial glory I see
I danced over the bareness of you
Prior to, I'd held the seed of wonder in me
And tasted its sweet surrender
Glowing with priceless rhapsody

If you find your way through this void
I'll not be your home
Flutter to another pilgrim
I'll not be your home
You're slouched in your own meaningless droll
I broke free, escaped into another measure

Indifference

by Michael Caballero

For years and years many have wondered,
Curious scholars have often pondered:
 If there was no one around,
 And tree should fall upon the ground,
 Would it, perchance, create a sound?

But it's not the tree that worries me so -
There's another answer I crave to know:
 If a lonely man such as I,
 Were to take sick and finally die,
 Would anyone be caused to cry?

If a lonely man were to die unseen,
His earthly slate forever wiped clean,
 Then not for him should one pity,
 For he has passed away from thee -
 Instead, sorrow, for you and me.

Contemporary Social Problems

by Mike Sammons

Population Overflow

All the time, watch it,

go,

and

no matter what you try to do
religious people catch up to you.

It goes on anyways

'till the end of your days.

Everyone, everywhere, yet
still no one seems to care.

Until they bother someone,
someone important, too, and
even then little gets done.

Still the poor of the land
earn what they can to
extend their meager lives.

And what does it mean to you?

Not to trust your wives?

Don't do drugs! ~

Don't drink or smoke!

Relieve these people of their hope.

Use their monies for
guns and war.

Safety for people? Nevermore.



L. Mann

Perfection Flies for Old Man García

by James López

My great-grandfather died of old-age in an insane asylum, without a family, without his eight kids and wife, in a beautiful white room, alone, in a marvelous wicker rocking chair. A rocking chair was normally not allowed in an insane asylum such as this, but a special case was made as my great-grandmother insisted that the rules be slightly bent. She was a woman who believed that simple sentimentalities were the greatest asset to one's stable mental health. You see, my great-grandfather was very attached to that chair. He spent twelve years of his life constructing it. He cut down the trees for the wood, carved out the sculpture that adorned the arm rests and weaved the strips of wicker, in and out, in and out, until he had finished the most beautiful wicker rocking chair ever created.

For the whole story I must go back to 1912, to the small town of Buena Vista. As you walked down the lane of sea shells that was the main avenue, one noticed that the houses were amazingly close together, and for no apparent reason. The expanse of land that surrounded Buena Vista was immense; there was no need for anyone to be within a mile of each other. But they were close, so close that if a strong wind were to rise out of the lungs of the Earth, it would engulf the town in a matter of minutes and blow it into the sea. Yes, so close that one couldn't keep the fact that he had an itch a secret long enough before one of his neighbors would come over and scratch it for him. And at the village center, which was about forty yards long, the merchants sat to trade their goods with each other. At the far end of this lane, my great-grandfather sold fruit for a living.

One day, in the summer when the sun burned your insides, he left early to take a bath. Although he wasn't known for his enthusiasm towards work, my great-grandfather was a strong, virile man of forty-two years and in the prime of his health. And as he climbed into the old tile bath, he was unaware of the bar of soap that was directly under his foot. He landed promptly on his tailbone, screaming so loud that my great-grandmother dropped the laundry on the grass outside and ran inside, a nervous wreck. She was horrified at what she saw. There lay her husband, writhing in pain, with a swell on his lower back that looked like a second ass.

For weeks he sat on his side, engulfed in a mountain of pillows, while the local physician examined him.

"Mrs. García", he told my great-grandmother, "he will not be able to go back to work for a while. He shall eventually recover, but be gentle with him, he will suffer a great deal of discomfort."

This began, some say, the deterioration of my great-grandfather's mind. The minute he decided he was to build a special chair for his buttocks, the whole family shook. The swelling eventually went down, but he would not cease complaining of pain. Some said he was nothing but a lazy fart who praised God for his slip so that he would not have to return to work. Some went so far as to say he planned the whole incident, but this is a hard thing to believe. He just responded by saying, "Hell, fruit crates are heavy lifting and besides, I could slip on a fruit peel and be crippled for life."

The family was strained, and eventually my great-grandmother had to take over the fruit business. The consensus considered her crazy for supporting the bum of a husband while she had eight children to worry about. But she didn't mind, she loved him, and as long as he was happy, so was she. She was strong, she could manage.

Then, on a Thursday morning late in July, he rose early from his bed, and as if he were programmed, picked up his axe and left for the woods. His dream had begun.

That afternoon, when he returned, he had enough wood to construct twenty chairs, but surely mistakes were to occur and only the most perfect pieces were to be used. His neighbors just stared over the fence and shook their heads. Surely, García had gone mad.

Every action that he performed from that moment on contained such intensity that it was amazing how he could possibly withstand the laborious details of even the smallest of his tasks. For example, he would awake early in the morning, and after a slight breakfast, would walk out in the yard and would slowly lay his tools out one by one, with such care that one would think they were made of glass. By the time his workplace was in order, it was about time for lunch. Such acuteness of organization is practically inconceivable, but he persisted and performed this deed every day at dawn.

One morning, my great-grandmother suggested that he should leave the tools out

overnight so that he would not have to carry out the monotonous and laborious task of resetting his workplace every morning. How she regretted ever uttering those words! The moment she said these words, he slowly set his silverware down and he thought for a few moments. Suddenly, he rose up, grabbed his plate, and hurled it across the kitchen, smashing it to a thousand pieces across the floor.

"You say leave my tools out there so that some rogue can come and ruin my masterpiece. My effort at creating the most beautiful chair on Earth shall not be foiled by anyone, including you and your silly statements!"

All eight little faces sat with mouths gaping open and eyes wide. No one had ever stolen a thing in Buena Vista; there was not even a police force. They had never seen their father act this way. Here was man so gentle that he hated to bruise fruit. This chair had become an obsession. No one ever mentioned it again.

Years passed and the chair began to take form, while my great-grandfather began to lose form. Such was his desire to finish that he ceased eating, for all practical purposes, and he stopped talking to everyone. He walked in a daze, whispering figures to himself. He talked at length with his tools.

No one knows exactly when he finished the chair. One day, twelve years after having first walked out of the door, my great-grandmother walked into the living room, and there sat my great-grandfather, rocking back and forth in the most beautiful chair she had ever seen.

He had a smile from ear to ear and a gleam in his eye so bright it shone a light on the wall. He turned his head slowly towards his wife and uttered the first complete sentence to her in twelve years. "My dear, how your hair has grayed." She fell to his feet, tears of joy flowing down the new wrinkles in her face. He just stared at the wall, smiling as if posing for a picture.

Some say he didn't get out of the chair for three days and nights. This is disputable; however, when he finally did get up, it was to answer the door, for all his neighbors had come to see the chair. Almost all of Buena Vista stood in line till late at night to see García's creation. They stood, gasping at the beauty they saw. He had become the Michelangelo of Buena Vista, and a living legend.

The back of the chair stood a foot above my great-grandfather's head and the corners bent

forward as if guarding his precious figure. Two knobs adorned each upper end and were so intricately carved that they made perfect melody with the posts they ruled over. The wicker strips that supported his injured tailbone, buttocks, and back were flawless, and weaved in such a way as to portray, for those who looked close enough, a beautiful image of a most loving face. The armrests were the zenith of sculpture. The carvings that flowed in and out of one another formed a beautiful, yet fragile pair of wings that supported the weight of my great-grandfather's forearms for hours on end. And jutting out at the end of each set of wings, a cherubim's face, so tender and beautiful that they leaped out and kissed you on the cheek and told you, "Don't worry, everything will be all right." In this throne, Mauricio García, my great-grandfather, reclined.

People by the throngs asked him to make them a chair of such utter and complete beauty. Yet no matter how sincerely they asked him, he always declined, saying that he could never surpass the perfection of his own masterpiece. "I have created the perfect chair; to do less would reduce me to the status of a common carpenter. Perfection cannot be bargained with."

However, some could not take "no" for an answer. They could not cope with the fact that they could not have their own chair.

"García once again shows what a lazy fart he really is. García thinks for García alone and no one else. He is nothing but a self-centered turd," old man Martinez used to say.

My great-grandfather did not mind; he had created perfection and would live within its grasp forever. He sat in that chair up to twelve hours a day for the next decade. Then, at sixty-four years of age, he went insane.

You see, it happened one day, a Thursday in July. In fact it was the anniversary of his first having set upon his task, but since no one remembered so far back, the event went unnoticed. Buena Vista is a very hot and humid place and my great-grandfather sat in his chair, fanning himself. As so many years had passed without his attending to the house, the window screens had developed holes and a fly happened to enter the house and land on his nose. He fanned it away with some annoyance, but soon forgot about the insect.

But the fly continued to circulate around his head as if in orbit and it began to annoy him

very, very much. His eyes twisted in their sockets attempting to follow the insects' path throughout the air. The fly finally landed on the sculptured armrest of the chair.

Slowly, my great-grandfather reached down, removed his slipper, and with the reflexes not common in a man his age, swung at the fly. He smashed it to a soft, yellowy liquid. Satisfied, he wiped it off - and then his eyes fell upon the minute scratch he had left upon the cherubim's delicate forehead. It was siesta time, and everyone was startled awake by the piercing scream that issued from my great-grandfather's lips. His family ran into the room only to see him crouched on the floor, clutching the chair and muttering nonsense. "Perfection . . . gone . . . damn fly . . . rid of you . . . perfection . . . perfection . . . PERFECTION!!"

He stopped eating again, and began his stalk of flies. He started talking to himself, just as in the old days of his creating. No one dared get within ten yards of him.

From morning to night he combed the house with a swatter, killing flies by the hundreds. (He had removed the screens from the windows altogether, inviting the insects to come in.) With every fly he killed, he talked to it, as if gloating over another dead victim. The family tolerated this until one especially hot afternoon.

One day as he was kneeling on the kitchen floor, searching for flies under the sink, he heard someone enter the room. He looked up only to find his youngest daughter, Esperanza, with a monstrous horsefly on her forehead. The fly had wings six inches across and a huge gaping mouth that was tearing into the flesh of his daughter's forehead.

At first he slowly rose to attack it, but soon deduced that a swatter would not satisfy his requirement. He ordered Esperanza to stand still and slowly reached over to grab the large butcher knife that lay on the counter. He lunged at his daughter, his eyes fixed on the beast. Esperanza ran screaming to her mother, and when my great-grandmother re-entered the room, she found her husband whimpering on the floor like a young infant, muttering over and over again . . .

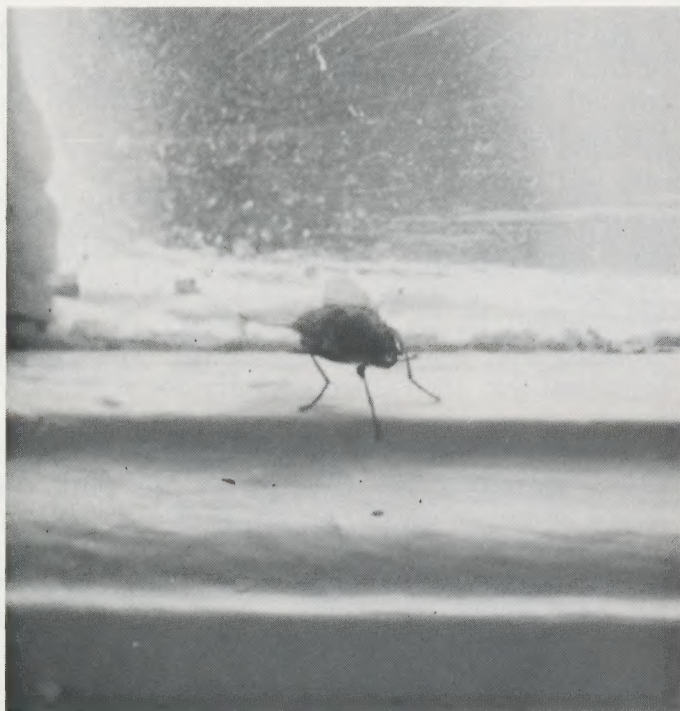
"My beloved chair . . . the beasts . . . I'll kill them all . . . my beloved chair . . . the beas . . ."

My great-grandmother finally realized it was too late.

It was a sad day in the García family when the men took my great-grandfather away. My great-grandmother, a broad and healthy woman, stood among her eight children, some grown and towering over her, as they sat her husband in the white van and removed the chair from the living room. She knew it was for the best, but she could not help from letting her lip tremble and a soft tear run down her aging face.

My great-grandfather had completely flipped, of course, but he did not suffer.

He sat in that beautiful white, soft room until he was ninety-eight years of age, rocking back and forth, in a flawed rocking chair, his eyes combing the room for the next unlucky fly that was to happen to wander in. 🪰



L. Mann

Argument Against Abridgement

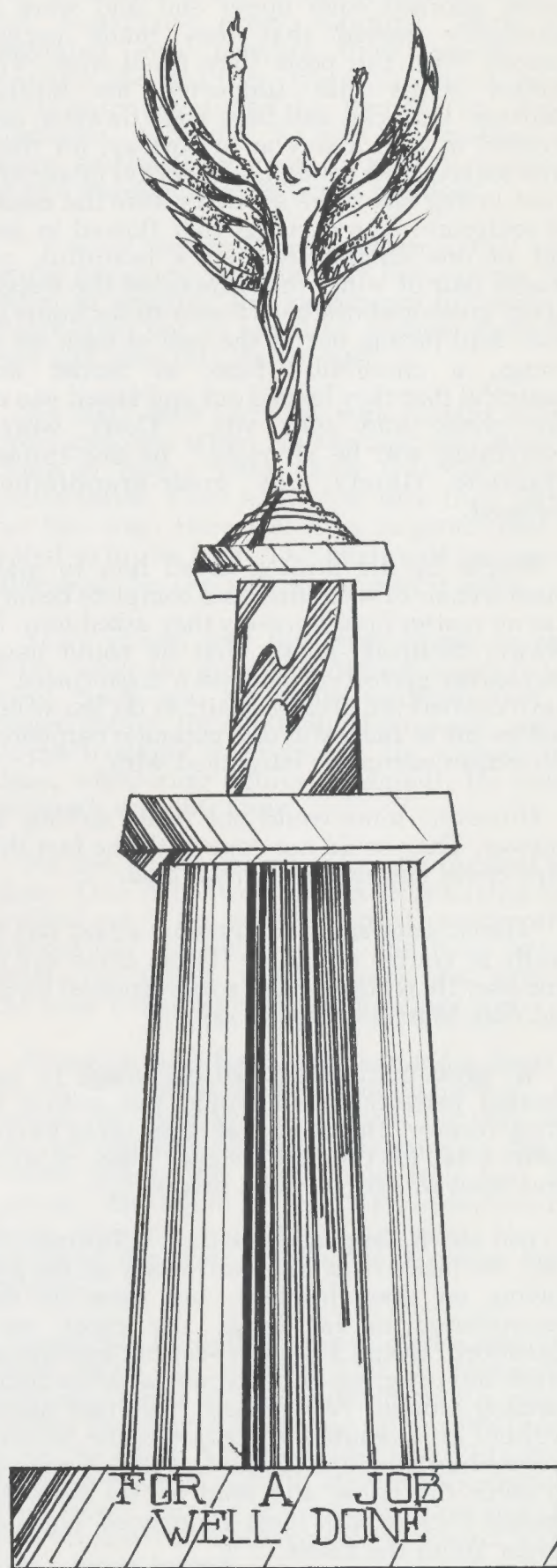
by Chris Bruns

A limericist once contrived
to make his works stop e'er line five
said he, 'tis a chore
to cut back to line four,

Another, competitively,
ended a poem at line three
Since the poem ended with "orange",

Then, a young lass of Corfu
shut a limerick down at line two.

At last an old man from Verdun



Peter Kang

The Trophy

by Stephen Wheeler

The trophy sat in the corner of his room,
 "For a job well done" it said,
 But only he entered his room to see it,
 And the others soon forgot.

A Great Thing

by Stephen Wheeler

Perfume is a great thing,
 to smell.
 Music is a great thing,
 to hear.
 A picture is a great thing,
 to see.
 So why does everyone say,
 life's a waste?

Somewhere Out There

by David Camacho

Alone in a silo,
 Sitting in the dark,
 Thinking back to yesterday
 When things were not so stark.
 I was stationed out here with my new bride,
 So I could be all that I could be
 But something happened, I don't know what,
 Without warning, she left me.
 I've got three more years out here,
 Nothing left for me now.
 She was all I had, all I wanted,
 I can't go on, I don't know how.
 So why no go out with a bang?
 Press the button, turn the key
 And away goes the missile,
 To give old mama bear a severe upset tummy.
 So, hey, I hope you don't mind
 If I take a few of you buggers with me,
 But you know how the saying goes:
 "Kill a Commie for your Mommy."



Time

by Lance Kane

Though you come and go,
As minutes meet minutes
And days meet nights,
You are the never-changing spectator
Of our ever-changing lives.
You are always and shall always be,
Unlike us; who are as numerous and tiny as droplets in the sea,
For we change, conform, cheer, and cry.
You are eternally present, year after year on the earth
While we are merely mortal and live and die.
Watched again and again by you, millions of us falter,
While you, the immutable observer never alter.
Such a great mystery are you that
Compared to our temporariness
None can understand your immensity.

